

# Overcoming a Bottle Strike

Adapted from Amy Peterson & Mindy Harmer's book [Balancing Breast & Bottle: Reaching Your Breastfeeding Goals](#)

A bottle strike can be very frustrating! First, rule out any physical problems like earaches, colds, thrush or teething that could be affecting your baby's willingness to take a bottle. Next, consider the following ideas to help coax your little one back to a bottle again.

## Positioning

- Try different feeding positions in your arms. Baby...
  - sitting
  - lying down
  - facing toward
  - facing away
- Try different feeding positions, not being held. In a...
  - swing or bouncy chair
  - stroller or car seat
  - tub at bath time

## Timing

- Offer the bottle about 30 minutes to an hour after breastfeeding, when your baby is awake but not too hungry.
- Offer the bottle in the middle of the night or when your baby is just waking up from a nap, still slightly groggy and wanting to nurse.
- If your baby will accept a bottle from mom but not from dad, try handing baby off during a feeding and offering the bottle "together."

## Associations & Distractions

- Swaddle your baby in a blanket or piece of clothing that smells like mom.
- Sing a "feeding time song." Sing a song before and while you breastfeed your baby. Sing the same song before and during a bottle-feeding, as it may help your baby associate the two. Dads and caregivers can also help by learning the "feeding time song."

## Switcheroo!

- If your baby is willing to suck on your finger, slip the bottle in while baby is sucking. This will affect mouth placement temporarily but might get baby over the hump.
- Try replacing your nipple with the bottle after the first letdown so baby's initial hunger is satisfied at the breast.

## Do not:

...engage in bottle battles that involve a screaming baby and frustrated parents.  
Whenever possible, keep feeding attempts low-stress.

...let the baby get "good and hungry" so he will take a bottle. You will have better luck offering the bottle at the earliest signs of hunger.

...plan to feed your baby long-term with a syringe, eye-dropper or medicine cup – babies like and need to suck. Alternative feeding methods have their place, but are not usually appropriate when babies need more than an ounce or two at a feeding.